

## Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 SEOUL 05588 281008Z

ACTION EA-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10

L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 ICA-11

OES-07 DLOS-09 /082 W

-----063348 281037Z /13

P R 280905Z JUN 78

FM AMEMBASSY SEOUL

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 1948

INFO AMEMBASSY TOKYO

CINCPAC

C O N F I D E N T I A L SEOUL 5588

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PLOS, MOPS, KS, KN, US

SUBJECT: NORTH/SOUTH KOREAN BOAT INCIDENT IN YELLOW SEA

1. NORTH KOREAN FISHING BOAT WAS CAPSIZED IN THE YELLOW SEA JUNE 27 IN AN ENCOUNTER WITH A ROK NAVY (ROKN) PATROL BOAT. SURVIVING CREW WERE PICKED UP AND ARE IN ROKN CUSTODY.

2. BY ROKG ACCOUNT, ROKN RADARS ON P.Y.DO (ISLAND) AT APPROXIMATELY 1810 JUNE 27, LOCAL TIME, BEGAN TRACKING ONE OR MORE UNIDENTIFIED VESSELS MOVING SOUTHWARD FROM A POINT JUST NORTH OF THE NAUTICAL LIMITATION LINE (NLL). THE SIGHTINGS WERE INTERPRETED AS A FISHING BOAT FOLLOWED BY TWO NK NAVAL PATROL CRAFT.

3. WHEN THE FISHERMAN HAD CROSSED THE LINE AND CONTINUED SOUTHWARD TO WITHIN 1000 YARS OF P.Y.DO, A ROKN DESTROYER AND TWO PATROL BOATS WERE DIRECTED TO INTERCEPT IT. THE TWO PURSUING NK PATROL CRAFT BACKED OFF AND RETURNED NORTHWARD AFTER DESTROYER FIRED A SHOT ACROSS THEIR BOWS.

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4. FISHING BOAT COLLIDED WITH ROKN PATROL BOAT, CAPSIZED AND SANK DURING BOARDING ATTEMPT IN ROUGH SEAS AND HEAVY FOG. FIVE SURVIVORS WERE RESCUED. ROK PRESS ANNOUNCEMENT PLACES SINKING NEAR PAEKYONG ISLAND, 4-5 MI. SOUTH OF THE NAUTICAL LIMIT LINE.

5. TWO NK PATROL CRAFT MEANTIME ATTEMPTED TO RETURN TO

THE SCENE, BUT AFTER AN INEFFECTUAL EXCHANGE OF FIRE  
THEY AGAIN RETURNED NORTH.

6. ROK PRESS DESCRIBES THE BOAT ONLY AS A 30-TON FISHERMAN, WHILE INITIAL NK COMMUNIQUE CALLS IT ANGLE FISHING NET BOAT NO. 512 OF THE NAMPO FISHERY STATION, OPERATING UNDER THE GUIDANCE OF AN UNIDENTIFIED COMMAND SHIP.

7. BY BOTH SIDES' BROADCAST ACCOUNTS, THE BOAT WAS FLEEING NORTHWARD WHEN IT WAS INTERCEPTED. BEYOND THAT, THE NORTH TREATS THIS AS A REPLAY OF THE MAY 19 INCIDENT: THEY ADMIT THEIR BOAT "WAS ASTRAY", MAKE NO MENTION OF THEIR PATROL CRAFT OR OF THE LATTER'S FIRING, AND CLAIM THEIR BOAT SANK AFTER ROKN UNITS FIRED ON IT WITHOUT PROVOCATION. THEY DENOUNCE THE ACT AS PIRACY AND DEMAND THE IMMEDIATE RETURN OF SIX FISHERMEN.

8. UNLIKE THE MAY 19 INCIDENT, IN WHICH THE NK BOAT REPORTEDLY FIRED FIRST, ROKN EVIDENTLY DID MAKE AN NONVIOLENT INTERCEPTION AND THE SINKING RESULTED FROM SHIPHANDLING RATHER THAN GUNFIRE.

9. THE KPA SIDE OF THE MILITARY ARMISTICE COMMISSION (MAC) HAS FORMALLY PROTESTED THE INCIDENT AND HAS REQUESTED A MAC MEETING FOR 1100 ON JUNE 29. OUR SIDE HAS NOT YET COUNTERPROPOSED.

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10. COMMENT: WEHAD ORIGINALLY HOPED TO PROPOSE SECRETARIES MEETING PRIOR TO ANY CALL BY THE NORTH FOR A MEETING. ROK INABILITY TO AGREE QUICKLY TO THIS PROPOSAL RESULTED IN OUR LOSS OF INITIATIVE. WE ARE NOW URGING EARLIEST POSSIBLE RETURN OF FISHERMAN. RETURN WILL PROBABLY OCCUR THROUGH MAC CHANNEL, AT THE SECRETARY LEVEL. AS IN THE CASE OF THE RETURNEES

OF THE MAY 19 INCIDENT.  
STERN

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## Message Attributes

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**Review Markings:**  
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